Promoting Digital Pathways to Opportunity
Questions & Answers

Attached are questions and answers submitted at the March 10, 2017 Pre-Submittal briefing and via email to procurement@nola.gov.

1. **Why is the City pursuing a problem-based approach to addressing digital equity?**
   We are looking for creative solutions that engage local stakeholders in finding ways to leverage New Orleans culture, organizations, and shared experiences to bring technology to people who are under-represented in technology. Because this format is non-prescriptive, it provides Responders the flexibility to develop solutions to meet the needs of New Orleanians.

2. **What is Citymart's role? Can they help me put together my response?**
   Citymart is our partner in this Challenge. They helped us design the Challenge and they are assisting with outreach to potential national and international Responders who will partner with local Responders. We hope that partnership between solution providers from outside New Orleans and local Responders will help non New Orleans-based Responders to understand the local context while expanding local capacity to address digital equity issues.

3. **Do Responders need previous tech-related or government experience?**
   No, we are looking for people who understand the problem to develop great solutions to the problem.

4. **The RFI says that the City could choose not to pilot a solution. How likely is the City to pilot a solution? Is it worth my time preparing a very detailed / comprehensive submittal?**
   Yes, the City could choose not to pilot a solution if none of the submittals meet the needs of New Orleanians. However, the City is eager to identify great solutions and to partner with solution providers to implement those solutions and bring technology to underrepresented New Orleanians. For selected solutions, the City will work with solution providers to identify funding and in-kind resources, which could be provided by the City or another entity. Therefore, submittals should include any requests for in-kind resources.

5. **Does the City have a specific number of solutions it will choose? If you receive multiple excellent submittals, could the City choose to pilot more than one?**
   No, the City does not have a pre-determined number of solutions it hopes to find. Yes, the City could pilot multiple solutions. The number of solutions selected to be piloted will depend upon the quality of the submittals, and the availability of funding and City staff to manage projects.

6. **Explain how the City would choose an organization(s) to pilot its/their proposed solution(s) (ie - how are we evaluate responses).**
   The City will evaluate submittals based on multiple criteria – creativity, sustainability, impact on the target population, how well the submittal partners with local organizations, ability to leverage Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs), which is critical in connecting to the target population and leveraging the innovation and creativity that DBEs can bring to this effort. The City's Office of Supplier Diversity maintains a list of local DBE firms. There is also a link to their webpage from the Challenge webpage.

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7. **NOLA is thinking about piloting a solution but what if my solution can make the case for better impact and cost-effectiveness with a citywide rollout?**
Yes, the City also will consider a citywide rollout for solutions. If you propose a citywide rollout, please explain why a citywide rollout is a better solution than a pilot.

8. **How will chosen Responder(s) enter into an agreement with the City? How will the pilot be set up (i.e., timeline, location, partners, etc.)?**
The City could move forward with Cooperative Endeavor Agreements (CEAs), which are documents that codify an agreement between the City and an entity or multiple entities. Specifics like timeline, location, and partners would be discussed with solution providers to determine what is feasible. The City also could choose to release an RFP.
You can find a template CEA on the Challenge webpage.

9. **Is there money available for this project? How much?**
The City may be able to provide money from the General Fund to support the deployment of chosen solutions. The amount of money that could be available has not been determined.

   The City has timed the Digital Equity Challenge to allow chosen solutions to apply for a [Wisner Grant](#). The City would offer solution providers assistance with their Wisner Grant application. The City also can provide in-kind resources.

10. **Please tell us about the Broadband Fiber Initiative.**
Using funding from the Ford Foundation, the City is working with Foundation for Louisiana, Sewerage and Water Board, and a consultant to design an institutional fiber network that will connect City facilities. The City hopes to leverage high-speed internet to improve the provision of city services and to offer digital skills training to the community in city facilities. Sewerage and Water Board will use the fiber to help manage its infrastructure.

    Here's the link to the RFP used to solicit fiber network design services.
http://www.foundationforlouisiana.org/news/84/wanted-consultant-to-help-design-fiber-network-in-new-orleans.

11. **Can a company partner with another company to develop a submittal?**
Yes, the City encourages partnerships. Partnerships can include individuals, private firms, non-profits, etc.

12. **Can a Responder submit more than one solution?**
Yes.

13. **Please provide information on other Internet access and digital equity initiatives.**
In addition to the institutional fiber network, the City has a technology workforce development program, [Bootup NOLA](#).

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14. **Can individuals register with Buyspeed?**
    Yes, the tax-id for an individual is his/her social security number. You can use the Buyspeed registration guide on the Challenge webpage to help you register in Buyspeed. The guide includes specific instructions for individuals and entities based outside the United States. If you have additional questions, please email procurement@nola.gov.

15. **Is Buyspeed registration mandatory?**
    No. Responders are not required to register in Buyspeed. However, we encourage Responders to register in Buyspeed, which the City uses to improve management of the process of securing goods and services.

16. **How will the City facilitate connections between potential Responders and selected Responders?**
    The City will share contact information for people who attended the web briefings in person and online to facilitate partnership to create submittals. After choosing submittals to pilot, the City also may facilitate partnerships between the creators of complementary solutions.

17. **The Digital Equity Challenge targets multiple populations who are underrepresented in technology. Is there a group that is more "left out"?**
    The obvious group is children. However, there are many programs to bring technology to children. We'd like solutions to target other people who are underrepresented in technology, many of whom often are chronically unemployed. The City has multiple programs to help remove perceived barriers to opportunity for these people and would appreciate solutions that augment existing efforts.

18. **Is there an opportunity to present a rough sketch of the technology solution my company would propose to the City of New Orleans for a reaction before making a decision to do the full application?**
    No, City staff will not preview Responses to provide feedback prior formal submission of a proposed solution. However, potential Responders can submit questions via email to procurement@nola.gov or ask at the March 17, 2017 pre-submittal briefing.